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ABSTRACT

Western society sees art as beautiful, well crafted objects; and art education derives almost its entire theory and practice from this concept. However, this is only one function of the creative process and art educators need to reconsider the fullness and depth of the usage of that process and provide an alternative mission and practice of art education. This alternative use of the creative process can enhance and elevate the quality of the practitioner's life, not just the work of art produced. In this manner, art education becomes a powerful instrument, as it has been for primal people, for transforming the quality of people's lives. Adjustments in goals and means would help transform art education: (1) from art as entertainment to art being employed as a power to transform lives; (2) from art education that produces objects to art education that includes celebration, self-discovery, and personal and collective empowerment; (3) from art education that focuses on replication of past art forms to focusing on discovering and expanding on what is possible in human affairs; (4) from isolation of other art forms to integration of all; and (5) from the structured institutions where art is taught to places where democratic processes, compassion, self-discovery, and authenticity of whole persons attending to one another. Art is not only pretty, art is power; and power not only to transform the face of the page, but the quality of life. (KM)

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Art as Transformation

Peter London

A transcript of a talk delivered
at the National Art Education
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I wish to propose a rather immodest idea for your consideration. In order to ask this of you, I want first to show you that other professions and professionals are being equally challenged today. In a recent article in the Science section of the Boston Globe entitled, "Back to Square One," the author, David Chandler, writes, "The time may have come to rethink key stages in the origin of everything, some theorists say....Many cosmologists are doubting almost everything they thought they knew about the events since the Big Bang that produced the stars, galaxies, and clusters of galaxies." (and that's us too.) "Mounting evidence shows that at the dawn of the universe, matter was incredibly uniformly distributed. Now, increasingly, evidence is that the universe is incredibly lumpy. No theories exist for the rapid and extensive transition between these two states." Plus, most of the "matter" of the universe seems to be "missing." That is, theory and oblique evidence says it must be there, but so far, "it", the vast majority of the universe, appears to be missing.[1]

The global community of scientists are frank enough in their assessment of the state of their knowledge concerning the origin and evolution of everything to state that their theories are fundamentally lacking in comprehensivenes, detail, even correctness, and thus, in need of profound reconsideration. It seems to me that we, in the profession of Art Education may be equally humble and declare that we too may "know" less than there is to know, and that our theory and practice may also be in need of reconsideration.

And thus, my proposal to follow. I wish, at the outset, to make a claim critical of the field of Art Education. Practically the entire theory and practice of Art Education derives from a specific conception of what Art is and what artists do. This conception, in the main, can be described as Art as the pursuit of the unique, self-expressive, aesthetic amenity. Art Education has become in the main strategies to replicate, study, talk about and display these aesthetic amenities.

With such a provocative claim, I must define what is meant by an aesthetic amentiy. To do so, I'll turn to the field of music, and relate to you the observations of Richard Taruskin, who, in a recent N.Y. Times article on Johann Sebastian Bach notes, "Modern musicians - composers, scholars and performers of every stripe - are essentially formalists at heart. And so are modern listeners." (for musicians, read artists and listeners, read viewers) "Listeners value performances to the extent that they are beautiful sounding....Lip service is paid to..'unfailing expressive profundity', but the whole question of expression is assimilated to innocuous notions of beautiful form....all music stands or falls as distinguished entertainment."[2]

It is my belief that in all the arts, the quality that our society seeks in every piece we make, places in our homes, hangs in our museums, and wins art competitions, is the beautiful, well-crafted thing. This beautiful thing becomes an amenity because we seek in it primarily relief from, or enhancement of, our everyday life. Art today is Decoration. Imaginative, provocative, well-crafted, even sublime, but nonetheless, DECORATION.

The production of aesthetic amenities is certainly personally and socially rewarding. And we all do desire, even need distinguished entertain-

ment to distract us from the pettiness of much of our day to day chores and divert our attention from the results of the all too frequent inadequacies of humans to be humane, just and compassionate.

Art as aesthetic amenity is good and necessary, and Art Education focused on the production and informed discussion about the history and merits of aesthetic amenities also serves a good and necessary function. But, this is only one function of the creative process, serving only one societal need. And if this one employment of the creative process is taken as the entire mission and practice of Art Education, then we have the confined, incomplete, and to my mind, rather shallow mission and practice we currently have. Further, even this single function of art is reduced to a certain class of art forms, namely the classical forms of drawing, painting, sculpture, and more recently, crafts, design and architecture. And even these art forms are further reduced in Art Education by studying and initiating only those forms produced primarily by men, by whites, of European lineage, and mostly by Christians. Name for instance, one great synagogue? one great Muslim calligrapher, one Black woman sculptor? one Native American photographer?

There are other functions of the creative process, and in times such as these, it is well that we consider alternative bases to our mission and our practice.

I am proposing a reconsideration of the fullness and depth of that usage of the creative process. I am also proposing an alternative employment of the creative process - and thus an alternative mission and practice of art education. This alternative use of the creative process is to enhance and elevate the quality of the practitioner's life, and not only the practitioner's page, canvas, or clay. And that Art is, and Art Education could become, a powerful instrument through which we may and primal people have always, transformed the quality of their lives - from an inherited state of being towards a preferred state.

Allow me to quote two well known sources to contrast the prevailing practice with what I am proposing as an alternative. The first is from Robert Henri, who states in his book, The Art Spirit,

> "The object of painting a picture is not to make a picture--however unreasonable this may sound. The picture, if a picture results, is a *by-product* and may be useful, valuable, interesting as a sign of what has past. The object, which is back of every true work of art, is *the attainment of a state of being*, a state of high functioning, a more than ordinary moment of existence. In such moments activity is inevitable, and whether this activity is with brush, pen, chisel, or tongue, its result is but a by-product of the state, a trace, the footprint of the state."[3]

In marked contrast to this function of art, I quote now from the Opening Remarks of Maurice Sevigny, who states at the second DBAE issues symposium, "Inheriting the Theory: New Voices and Multiple Perspectives on Discipline-Based Art Education." "Discipline-based art education (DBAE) is an integrated concept that focuses on the art object through a combination of the curriculum content from the four disciplines of art." [4]

Can you hear how different the base, the point of concern here is between Sevigny's statement declaring the domain of DBAE, and one must suppose Art Education, and that of Robert Henri? Both are legitimate goals; both are good. But they are not the same. One focuses clearly on an OBJECT, the other on a PERSON. One is interested in producing and talking about enhanced objects; the other's concern is with enhanced living.

Let me explain further how art as we commonly conceive of it and Art Education as it is commonly practiced, is about Aesthetic Amenities. For this I turn to the most venerable artist of our time, Pablo Picasso, and perhaps, the most important art object made in our time, his painting, "Damoiselles D'Avignon." I will try to show that what Picasso did in this work provides the exact model of what Art Educators have done, or do, throughout our classroom practices.

Visualize, if you will, this most familiar painting, blue and pink large female figures adorned with strident Africanesque mask-like faces. Picasso's "Les D'amoiselles D'Avignon" was begun in the late Spring of 1907, the conclusion of his classical period. The painting begins with sketches and soon becomes a painting in progress initially called, "Figures in a Bordello." As the painting progresses, still in his classical but increasingly stylized fashion, it is subsequently retitled, "Medical Student, Sailors and Five Nudes in a Bordello." This painting seems to "acknowledge" the work of other painters familiar to Picasso at the time; Matisse's "Bonheur de vivre" and "Nude Blue", Derain's "Brothers" and two Iberian sculptures. Then, with a visit to the Ethnographic Museum at the Palais du Trocadero in June of 1907 and seeing an exhibition of New Caledonian figures, Picasso returns to his studio, readdresses his "Bordello" painting in progress and repaints the work introducing the newly acquired Africanesque design sensibilities on top of and partially obliterating the earlier, classical period of style and motifs.[5]

This act of Picasso, taking the formal, decorative elements residing on the surface of another culture's artifact, without bothering to learn about the meaning and the purposes of those formal elements, epitomizes the all too frequent cultural and intellectual indifference and sense of superiority of the Western mind to anything or anybody that is not also Western (and preferably white, male, etc., etc.)

Picasso's act of confronting something infinitely deep without pausing to take its actual measure, and instead, to skim the most familiar aspects of it, is archetypal of Western cultural presumptions. It is also all too typical of a good deal of the practice of Art Education in our times.

How dare I condemn art education practices so broadly? Let me provide you with a current example. For this, I turn to evidence which recently (January 1991) appeared in a venerable source: School Arts Magazine, a magazine on which I serve, and proudly, as an editorial board member, and which I honestly believe presents the best of current classroom practice. The author of this item is a doctoral candidate in Art Education; the author is a candidate in one of America's most prestigious institutions of higher education, and its Art Education program is deservedly one of the finest. This curriculum idea represents a crisp, informed, and sound rendition of traditional art lessons. If I presented evidence of a lesser quality, you could

dismiss it as atypical of our practice and second-rate; this example is neither.

African Mask Designs

Elementary

Purpose: To encourage appreciation of African mask design.
Materials: White paper plates, pencils, oil crayons.
Process: In conjunction with Black History Month, fifth graders studied drawings of traditional African masks. They noticed the use of many lines and shapes and the repetition of line. They also saw that facial features were exaggerated or made smaller than usual. The fifth graders learned that some twentieth century artists, such as Picasso, were influenced by primitive African art.

Making their own mask designs on paper plates, students first drew designs in pencil and then added color to the lines and to spaces between the lines. Instead of leaving the white of the paper plate for white areas, students colored them with white oil crayon. No space was left vacant of oil crayon.

Students used the first 50-minute period to create the design in pencil and to begin adding color. The following class was used for completion of the masks. This included discussion of strengths and weaknesses of designs and final adjustments. Completed designs were mounted on square sheets of construction paper and displayed on bulletin boards throughout the school.[6]

Although this lesson was intended for 5th graders, the identical lesson could be taught, intact, and is, to any higher grade and age students. Can you see how the author of this lesson did nothing less, or more, than Picasso did when he looked at an African mask, and saw only surface design?

And what is the problem of that?

Well, a mask is simply not about surface design; a mask is a transformative device, a powerful device. Its intention is not aesthetic, its means are aesthetic, but its intentions are more profound and dynamic. Let me explain:

From the outside, the mask is an example of the craft, exotic imagination, primitive thinking of a "foreign" people. It is also an example of skillful manipulation of the language of design; line, color, form, texture, etc. It is a source of stimulation for personal reflections. It is a commodity of certain relativistic economic value: A trophy of our good taste. It is "distinguished entertainment". It is something that we can extract certain desired elements put to our own uses such as ideas for art lessons, or something nice to put on our walls. It is an object of study. Using our criteria of goodness, or beauty, we can then proceed to evaluate "it", pronounce aesthetic judgements. "It" remains "It"; something foreign, other, outside of our personally experienced life.

There are substantial problems for us, and the "other", when we think and act this way. To represent these problems I quote some passages from Behind the Mask in Mexico, edited by Janet Brody Esser.

> "Many recent presentations of Mexican masks have focused on the masks themselves as *objets d'art*, emphasizing their formal and expressive qualities. The context in which masks function rarely is alluded to and often totally ignored...Masks puzzle us and appear somehow exotic and mysteriously 'other.' We extol, therefore, the supposed rarity, antiquity, and curiously bizarre forms of the masks (because that is how we have come to perceive them) and thereby miss the whole point. Mexican masks are not like paintings and sculptures made by professional artists in our own society.... Any assumptions with regard to meaning made by uninformed outsiders run the risk of being at best fallacious and patronizing, and at worst unethically exploitive."[7]

(Could it also be, just as we invariably miss the whole point about the functions of Masks, that we (art educators) may also be missing the whole point about the function of ART?)

> "Our misrepresentation of these genuine cultural artifacts insults Mexican folk artists, denies the value of Mexican folk culture, and ultimately leaves us with only the reflection of our own narcissistic image....Mexican masks are part of a highly structured and carefully organized cermonials that permit their constituency to celebrate themselves... While expressing the varied and profound concerns and values of the community, masks also lift people out of their ordinary, workaday existence and present, for a little while, a very special world where anything is possible.
>
> "The mask is not simply a work from the hands of a solitary creator--it is also the embodiment of the environment in which it is produced. The mask fortifies venerable traditions and ensures their continuity, while at the same time enriching the community's aesthetic and spiritual ambience... When the mask is extracted from its context, it is converted into an object--perhaps beautiful or even exotic, but inert and cold."[8]

[A DAN mask is presented. Cowerie shells form a ring above the forehead, brass bells form a similar ring beneath the jowels and chin.] If we allow ourselves to pause a moment, and experience, engage in the intentions residing just under the surface of the Mask, this is what we may find:

· Masks are invariably part of a festival. The purpose of all festivals is to leave off everyday life and to experience what elevated living may be and is promised to be, in other words, a transformative experience.

· Masks in festivals shift whole communities from what it historically has become, to what its myths declare it can become.

· Masks shift us from what is, to what is desired; from local power to universal power, from local identity to universal relationship, from local and personal history to universal and mythic belongingness.

· Masking allows the release of pent-up ideas and emotion, to be expressed in the powerful context of the public arena.

· Masking allows the isolated, finite, fragile self to melt away and what is left of the ego to fuse with a super identity, purpose and power.

· Masking joins us with wider and deeper frames of reference and belonging. Masking unites the secular with the sacred; the here and now with the then and there; the historical with the mythic; and the personal with the transpersonal.

· Masking invigorates the burden of belief, the work of belief, by exercising it and pushing it past the point of ordinary exhaustion. (The momentum of the music, movement, singing and synchronization of them all, allows one and all to shift into an altered and empowered state of functioning.) What would be exhausting if done in isolation becomes possible when done in concert with others.

· Masking, like storytelling, intends the education of the people, presenting them with the <u>incarnation</u> of their cultural legacy; the truths which shape and guide their society; celebrating the greatness of their traditions, reinforcing the legitimacy of their values, reminding them of their calling - destiny.[9]

The mask is not the only such artform that serves as a transformative/transitional object. Every specially made article of clothing, furniture, architecture, ornament, utensil, and speech, movement, sound may serve likewise. In other words, whenever Art is made in genuine celebration or expression, it is made as an instrument of <u>transformation</u>, deriving from the ordinary dimension of things, uses and process but <u>now</u> intended for extraordinary purposes.

I have become increasingly intrigued with the implications of the following thought. Every time a parent devotes time and care in baking a birthday cake, or sewing a party outfit for their child; every time you and I get all dressed up and slick down (or up) our hair when we go out with a loved one; every time we sing a child to sleep, or set the table just so for expected guests; each such occasion is an engagement in an authentic Creative Act, the purpose of which is the transformation, the elevation of the Self, and the other from "it" to "Thou". And it may be that there is more power, meaning, and poignancy in these <u>humble</u> creative acts, than what is ordinarily produced through the aegis of much art education, fixated as it seems to be with the formal, surface aspects of things and acts.

Art, no matter the humbleness of its forms, can become powerful, transformative endeavor. The creative process, when employed in this manner, can elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary; from meeting the world as an objective "it", to engaging with the world in such an intense and caring manner so as to raise "it" to the level of THOU.

- Isn't that what Mondrian did with right angles and primary colors?
- Isn't that what a loving parent does when they transform a pound cake into a birthday cake?
- Art is Power Talk. Let me explain.

Sandy Meisner, the distinguished drama teacher offers us an interesting perspective here. He notes that art is a certain way of speaking; it is not conventional discourse, it is Power Talk. This speaking through the means of expressive images and gestures and utterances is a special langauge employed in special situations where the easier or more corrupted way of speaking, that is, with conventional phrasing, won't do. It won't do because, Art Speak is a fusion of mind and spirit. Art Speak is an alloying of conscious and subconscious points or necessity.[10]

Art Speak should be a way of speaking reserved for thinking that must not be lied about. Or is so very precious, it can only be lied about; the truth being too searing, even for the speaker to enunciate directly. That, by the way is why we have singing, chanting, holloring, sobbing and laughter; ART!

And I am interested in a training to Art Speak which avoids the trendy use of Art as astute talk about aesthetic amenities, scanning them, skinning them for their surface qualities, leaving all the wonder and mystery and meaning residing beneath the surface undisturbed. I become disinterested in people who know little if anything about the awesome, transformative power of the Creative Process, but because they love pretty things, and love looking at pictures and love talking about things they have read about things, unwittingly degrade this great way of speaking.

Speak ART when nothing else will do, exhorts Meisner.

I would like to now call your attention to another related issue. I first observed this in Picasso's reducing the tradition of African Masking down to a fascination with the surface qualities of African Masks. It is our persistent habit of secularizing and materializing and instrumentalizing just about everything we set our minds to. We seem to take a perverse pleasure in leveling the mountains, filling the valleys, smoothing out Nature's, and our own, unseemly bumps and slathering the whole mess with makeup or blacktop. Herbert Marcuse calls this tendency of ours One Dimensional Thinking, and this thesis appears in his landmark book, "One Dimensional Man."[11]

As a consequence, we have scant education in the emotions or the subconscious or the intuitive, or the spiritual. In my opinion, DBAE is the quintessinal statement of legitimizing this form of education and thus preparing children for truncated living.

The transformation I am speaking of is the transformation from one dimensional living, and education, to multi-dimensional living and education.

What special role does the creative process have in addressing this issue of One-Dimensionality? Unlike the analytic process, the historical process and the judgemental process, all of which exclusively employ the power of reason, description and memory; the Creative Process employs a multi-dimensional mindfulness: Intuition and Reason; Subconscious and Conscious; Emotion and Intelligence; Fantasy and Memory; and the Spiritual with the material; Mystery/unknowing with Calculation; Passion with the restraint of Reason. This fuller palette of Mind is the whole, integrated mind that Freud, Jung, and Rank speak about as being the hallmark of, the prerequisite of, a healthy integrated personality.

The creative mind, the creative process requires and fosters integrated, whole mindedness and this in turn is the prerequisite for an integrated, whole person. It is only whole persons who can hope to create integrated whole societies.

But now we do not fully access the richness of our multiple mindedness, and we are neither whole ourselves, nor integrated within the rest of the natural world. Listen to what a leading environmentalist, Paul Shepard says in his book, Nature and Madness.

We have damaged our planet, insulted our natural family, so that all things that can, move, flee before us. And we, of course, flee from all forms of darkness. We call nature that is not brought under our domination "wild." Wilderness. When all it is, is our untainted gift. We must find ways to rejoin our natural family; heal the injuries we have inflicted on our world and on ourselves and stop learning to fear that which is free of our domination.

In our desperate attempt to tame nature, and we all but have succeeded and in so doing, we have become tame, domesticated, dominating, dominated, unnatural denizens of an otherwise natural and integrated, exquisitely balanced universe.[12]

We have these observations of our destructive habits from Indigenous Americans, who themselves were cut down because they too were wild, and in our way. This quote is from Touch The Earth, by MacLuhan.

> We shake down acorns and pinenuts. We don't chop down the trees. But the White people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me." But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. They blast out trees and stir it to its depths. They saw up the trees. That hurts them. The Indians never hurt anything, but the White people destroy all. They blast rocks and scatter them on the ground. The rock says, "Don't. You are hurting me." But the White people pay no attention. How can the spirit of the Earth like the White man? Everywhere the White man has touched, it is sore.[13]

We tame the world because we fear the extensiveness of our selves, this uncontrolled, expansive, mysterious consciousness, mixed with affairs of the heart and sub and superconsciousness THAT must be controlled. This impulse to control, to tame ourselves, infects all our subsequent motivations and aspirations.

When we tame something we must subtract something from its original fullness. Thus we make great and subtle things, small. We reduce the multiplicity and complexity and mystery of the world to something more uniform, simple, obvious. In this way we have the One Dimensionalism of a Multi-Dimensional Universe. What a loss. This is the act of reductionism I claim Picasso is guilty of, but no more so than is our society in general. It is for this reason and the others I offered above, that I ask the field of Art Education to reconsider its mission and to re-establish the Creative Process

in the very center of our profession, and to employ the powers of the Creative Process not only to transform the page into something more distinguished, but also to transform the practitioner, likewise, that is, someone more distinguished.

The following are the shifts in goals and means I have in mind for our field.

· From Art concerned primarily as distinguished entertainment, to Art also employed as Power to transform our personal and collective lives to elevated levels of being.

· From Art Education primarily based on the production of novel aesthetic amenities, to Art and Art Education to also include Celebration, Clarification, Meditation, Self-discovery, Personal and Collective Empowerment; In short, to extend our mission of Art Education to include the transformation of who we are, to who we desire to be.

· From Art Education primarily focusing on the study and replication of past art forms, to Art Education focusing on drawing up, discovering and expanding upon, the map of existence, ~~definition of~~ defining what is possible in human affairs.

· From the isolation of Art and Art Education from other art forms and from the world itself, to the integration of kindred art forms which draw their inspiration and focus their ambitions upon life itself, wherever appropriate.

· And for us to work vigorously to shift from the schools and institutions we have; based as they are upon hierarchies, adversarial relations, subordination, and insubordination; To schools and institutions animated by democratic processes, compassion, self-discovery, and authenticity of whole persons attending to one another.

Does any of this strike you as true? Are you interested, as I am, in exploring the implications for Art and Art Education of what may happen when the base of Art Education shifts from the production and study of aesthetic amenities to more profound and powerful uses of the Creative Process? I think our pedagogy, our theories and practice of curriculum designs, the notions of what constitute a lesson, our notions of the purposes and means of assessment and the preparation of teachers must shift accordingly.

Would you be interested in exploring this together? If so, I would be willing to initiate a forum for its investigation. If you will let me know your own ideas and give me your name and address, I promise to correspond with you about a convocation of like-minded folks.

I believe these fractured, disjointed times and one dimensional thinking, call upon us, the community of artists and art educators, to expand our

mission beyond the making of aesthetic amenities. The Creative Process contains too much power to be confined by such a narrow scope.

We have been given, I mean you and I as artists, have been given a great gift - The Creative Process. Let us not truncate the power of this gift, not when there is so much to be done which this gift is so exquisitely fitted to do. We have inherited a civilization and its underlaying worldview which is based upon the primacy of parts over wholes, of individuals over communities, of humans presumed to be superior over all the rest of nature, of the best from the least, of Blacks from Whites, of Christians from Jew, of rich from poor, of men from women, of the gay from the straight community, of consciousness from subconsciousness and from reason over intuition, and nation from nation. We have inherited a bifurcated world with parts at war with each other.

The creative process is exactly the process which opposes - **fundamentally opposes**, these adversarial dichotomies.

It seems to me that this generation's great task is to find a way out of our prevailing confined world view. It seems fair to say that we must shift from experiencing ourselves and behaving as privileged, if dispossessed interlopers at war with everything and everyone and even ourselves, and learn to stand in open relationship with all others. This is the kind of transformation I am speaking of.

Here is where we, so-called creative types, may finally employ our gifts more substantially than is our want. Here is perhaps an expanded mission for Art and Art Educators. What is creativity in the formation of a work of art, or the formation of an integrated self, if it is not combining elements in such a manner as to bring them into more revealing relationships, revealing the pattern that connects, from the welter of superficially disparate and seemingly indifferent items in the universe. In this way we portray the specialness of each element while simultaneously expressing the extraordinary richness and resonance produced when individual elements are brought into a harmony of relationships.

I began this talk by saying I had an immodest proposal for your consideration. But I really didn't propose anything novel at all. Art in the service of personal and collective transformation was the earliest and still is the most common function of Art. It is only the Fine/High arts as practiced today that have operated otherwise. Myopically, Art Education has built much of its practice on this one Fine Arts function: the production of aesthetic amenities. In fact, the only immodest request ~~of~~ I am asking is to take stock of our actual and full legacy, and expand our mission and our practice accordingly. It may very well be that Art Education finds its place on the periphery of education and society, for similar reasons that the Fine Arts do today. Because we serve as entertainers, distinguished as we may be. And we are treated accordingly.

What if Art Education embraced this older, more ubiquitous, more powerful function? What might our practice look like? That is the questoin I set for myself some years ago. I still am challenged by it, still am experimenting and recently have begun to find my own range of responses. A very brief example

of an engagement with art from a base of personal transformation rather than a base of object d'art follows.

Remember the lesson on Africanesque masks I cited earlier? Where children scanned the mask for its surface design elements and then did their own renditions on paper plates? Here is how I would shift that lesson on design elements to a transformative encounter, via the visual arts.

This particular encounter with art focuses, as has my paper, on the transformative potentialities of the Creative Process. Other "lessons" could, and should properly, deal with exploiting still other dimensions of Art and its uses, such as cultural context, media and technique explorations, visual literacy, and so on.

But to the point of Art as Transformation, I would have you consider transposing the vehicle of masks, employed by other cultures but used less frequently and less importantly by our society, to our society's equivalent ideas and uses of personnas, or facades.

- I would ask you to create an image which would represent/express the "face" (facade, personna, mask) you show others who you wish to impress.
- Next I would invite you to create the look, the "face" of the person you know yourselves to be which resides underneath that "impressive" facade.
- Further, I would ask you to consider the "face" of the person you desire to be, and are now steering towards.
- At the completion of these three "masks", I would have you share the meanings behind each of these "masks" with one another, in a safe, supportive environment.
- Finally, I would encourage you to share what you can of these "masks" with someone at home, who you could trust with these important self-conceptions.

I believe these uses of the creative process via a visual arts form have power in them, and that the images so created have the ring of authenticity to them. Further, that this entire enterprise has a forward seeking dynamic, interested in expansion, becoming, elevation. It has also been my experience when all of this is in place, that the look of the works so created has all the evocativeness, all the sense of presence, and even all the craft of work which only seeks to emulate accepted cannons of good form. ~~Then some~~ THESE SAME observations were made by Viktor Lowenfeld who wrote "...it is the urge to express something meaningful which creates the desire for greater [technical] perfection."[14] My book, "No More Secondhand Art," explores these issues further.[15] But that is only my way, only one way. I can't imagine but there are an infinite number of other ways to design an art education program from this expanded base.[~~15~~]

Art is not only pretty, Art is Power. Power not only to transform the face of the page, but the quality of our lives.

I hope you agree.

END

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